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Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bugi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,

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each of which they split in two. These are piled on dry faggots, and covered over with dry brushwood, and burnt; when they think that they have been burnt long enough, they plaster wet mud over the heaps to prevent the escape of smoke, and leave them all night. Meanwhile they make the *mahua* charcoal, burning the heaps of dry logs and pouring water over the glowing embers; this can be collected overnight, but the *karra* charcoal is not ready till the morning.

They build a cylindrical furnace (*garum*) of clay, generally some 3½ feet high and tapering upwards, with a circumference at the base of nearly 5 feet and at the top of nearly 3 feet. At the back of the furnace a bamboo matting plastered with mud about 6 feet long and 3 feet broad is inclined from the mouth of the furnace at an angle of 35 or 40 degrees, and supported on four sticks fixed in the ground; this is called a *dikki*, and serves as a feeder. In front of the base of the furnace a hole is made for the blast, and at the side of the base a hole to serve as a flue for the slag; this flue is called *kachping*. It is plugged at first with wet clay, when the furnace is filled with fuel. The bellows (*arrangang*) are made from two sections of tree trunk about a foot in diameter and three inches thick; these are 'dug out' with axes or burnt out till the bottom is about an inch thick, and the tops are then lidded with cow-hide tied round the edge like the paper tops of English jam-jars. In the centre of each hide a small hole (*bukka*) is made, and one end of a two feet length of cord is passed through this and fixed to a short stick resting against the inside of the hide; the other end is tied to the end of a bamboo springe stick fastened at an angle to the ground in the earth behind the bellows. Each hide is soaked in water before use. The two bellows are placed side by side flat on the ground, and from holes in the front of their wooden walls two hollow bamboo tubes about two feet long converge to meet at the blast hole of the furnace, or rather at an earthen pipe made in prolongation of this hole; the pipe is made of wet clay plastered round a core of leaves; one end is plastered to the blast hole with clay, and the leaf core is then removed.

The bottom of the furnace is filled with a mixture of rice chaff and about a pound of *karra* charcoal broken small; this is fired through the bellows hole by blowing lighted charcoal through the earth pipe or *tuyère*, but the furnace is first filled to the brim with *karra* charcoal piled on the mixture of charcoal and chaff. The smith stands with one foot on each bellows, and depresses each in turn with alternate foot, supporting himself with a stick held in each hand; as his foot descends it closes the *bukka* hole, and the air is forced through the bamboo pipe and the earth *tuyère* into the

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325 furnace, which is soon in full blast: the depression of the bellows also depresses the end of the springe stick, which springs up as soon as the pressure of the foot is released and so lifts the hide with it and allows the bellows to get a fresh charge of air.

Meanwhile the iron ore after its preliminary burning in *saja* bark has been broken up with the hammer into small lumps and mixed with charcoal, the mixture being placed in readiness on the *dikki* feeder platform. When the furnace has been in blast for about fifteen minutes and the charcoal in it about half burnt, the assistant slowly passes the mixed ore and charcoal down the feeder into the mouth of the furnace, until none is left. After an hour, one of the men clears the clay plaster from the mouth of the slag flue, below which a little trench about six inches wide has been dug, and the slag falls through the flue into this trench. The heat is sometimes so great that the bellows man, instead of holding a support stick in both hands, holds in one a winnow or a piece of matting which he uses as a fan on his body. The whole furnace is generally roofed over as a protection from the sun; and in the hot weather, if smelting is unavoidable, it is done at night, though during the *mahua* and forest fruit collection season in March and April all the forges and furnaces are closed down. Smelting takes 3½ hours, and in the winter one lot of ore is smelted at dawn and another in the afternoon. They keep a small stock of ore for smelting in the rains, when they believe it useless to look for good ore.

After the 3½ hours' smelting the rough spongy bloom of iron that results is removed from the furnace to an ordinary open forge, where it is re-smelted in *mahua* charcoal and beaten out with the *mutti* hammer on a boulder of stone; this refining takes about an hour.

A furnace of this kind takes about 50 lb. of charcoal and 26 lb. of ore; it yields about 3 lb. of bloom, which on refining produces 4 lb. of iron, still more waste comes from which when it is worked up into implements.

326 The open forge which he uses for refining or for ordinary smithy work the Maria smith calls *o'idel*, the word used for the domestic hearth. He digs a small hole with the pointed end of his *mutti* hammer, crushes the earth so excavated with the blunt end of the hammer and makes it into mud with water. A little mud is smeared on the lip of the hole and the end of a stick laid on this, over which more mud is plastered till it is covered with a firm little mound of mud; the stick must slope downwards towards the centre of the hole. The stick is then worked round and round in the little mound of mud to make a firmly consolidated air passage through it,

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326 SMITHS AND THEIR CRAFTS--nonindustrialized specialization in metallurgical crafts; types of specialists (e.g., blacksmiths, coppersmiths, tinsmiths, silversmiths, goldsmiths, gunsmiths); special skills and services of each; products not elsewhere described; organization (e.g., guilds); social status of smiths; etc. See also:

Tools, weapons, utensils, and appliances . . . 41
Jewelers 306
Industrial specialization in metallurgical processes 327, 328

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larger and higher, generally with a separate cooking hut; and he is learning the Hindu habit of periodic re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung.

It was observed above that a Hill Maria's head with a round patch of hair on the crown drawn back into a top-knot and the rest shaved, but often stubbly or only less long than the crown patch, resembles in appearance a hill-crest with a clearing all around for *penda* cultivation and a grove of trees left standing on the summit. This is the old style of coiffure for men in the Abujhmar mountains, but the younger men incline to imitate Muria or Bison-horn Maria fashions. There are no recognized barbers among them; every man keeps his own razor and shaves his friends, who return the compliment. The razor blade is made by the nearest blacksmith from locally collected ore, and is shaped like a little single-edged *dao*, the edge being convexly curved, and the blade fitted into a small cylindrical wooden handle by a pointed tang heated and then worked into the round end of the handle; the greatest length of the blade varies from 7 to 8·5 cm., the greatest breadth is about 2 cm., and the handle is generally about 6 to 6·5 cm. long. They are kept wrapped in a dirty rag to prevent rust, and tucked into the loin-cloth near the small of the back. The barber grasps his patient's crown-tuft in his left hand, tilts his head forward, pours water over the hair to be removed, and pushes the razor-blade downwards from the crown through the hair, stropping the blade at intervals on his own calves or thigh, and wiping off any hair adhering to it on the patient's head. He first shaves the back of the head and neck, measuring the length of the crown patch to be left unshaved by the length of the crown-tuft as it hangs down unknotted; he then shaves the sides behind the ears and above the cheeks, including side-whiskers if any, and ends with the front of the skull. He shaves efficiently and quickly. There is seldom need to trim beard or moustache. The old and middle-aged have their heads shaved only once or twice a year, if as often; but it is thought slack for a younger man not to do so every month. There are no religious or social occasions, such as births, weddings, funerals, or visits to the clan-god, when shaving is obligatory. It is dangerous to leave your hair where your enemy or some witch or wizard may get hold of it; so you gather it, take it well into the jungle, hold it to your lips and puff it away, so depriving it of your personality or *jiwa* and making it useless for any magic.

Hair-dressing

Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *witto* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

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many of the places where game of all kinds was plentiful in his father's time. Every Maria has his bow and arrow, the population has multiplied, and miles of jungle have been beaten annually for game in the great spring hunts. Wild buffalo and bison had been so reduced in numbers that they were declared protected thirty years ago, and heavy fines have been imposed for shooting them. The supply of bison-horns is thus not equal to the demand, and the head-dress is therefore a highly prized hereditary possession. No one should try to buy them from their owners; if a specimen is needed, the collector should provide the horns and other materials and see it made up for him. Bison-horns being now rare, and obtainable only from a bison found dead or by purchase from the State Forest Department, various substitutes are being used, such as domestic bullocks' or small buffaloes' horns, wild boars' tushes, the long beaks of the hornbill, and, occasionally, the antlers of the spotted deer (*Cervus axis*). The most interesting substitutes are brass patterned horns, of the shape and size of bison-horns, made by the *cire-perdue* process by the local Gharwa (Ghasia) brass workers.

Except occasional dancing anklets of hollow iron with pebbles inside, the Bison-horn Maria wears no special dancing dress; in fact he girds up his loin-cloth higher than usual and generally discards his singlet or '*wasket*', so as to leave himself as free as possible for his antics, while the heavy drum that he carries slung from his right shoulder across his abdomen necessitates as much freedom as possible.

The women wear no special dancing dress, but put on every available ornament, and carry in their right hands *tirdudi* or bamboo staves to which are fastened bunches of iron pellet-bells, shaped something like short but plump pea-pods, which they clash in time with the drums as they dance by striking their butts on the ground. Similar bells sometimes adorn the drum-stick with which the left hand of the male dancer beats the cowskin membrane at the left end of his drum.

Weapons and tools

The universal *vade mecum* of the Hill Marias is the knife or *kanyaq* carried tucked into the loin-cloth, with or without a wooden sheath. Of this, as of all weapons and tools used by Hill or Bison-horn Marias, it has to be remembered that they are not always made by blacksmiths working exclusively for Marias, but often by blacksmiths in or near the bazaar villages of the plains who cater for Murias, Halbas and other tribes also. The most distinctive types are possibly, in the case of the Hill Marias, those made by the few blacksmiths living in their hills; but there are only slight differences, often of mere

[see cat. 116 p. 419]

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411 size, from those used in the plains. The plains blacksmith does recognize the Hill Maria's individual taste in such matters, but that ●326 taste is always being modified by the sight, occasional use and occasional purchase of plains types, particularly if, when a new weapon is wanted in a hurry, only the latter are immediately available.

411 The blade of the average Maria knife measures 13 to 15 cm. from the point to the beginning of the tang. It is about 2·5 cm. broad where the tang begins, and from there the cutting edge curves inwards for a quarter or a fifth of its length, thence tapering with a slight convex curve to the point, which is 2 or 3 cm. to the side of the axis of the handle. The reverse edge is about 3 mm. thick in the tang, the thickness gradually diminishing towards the point. The tang is a continuation of the thick side of the blade, about 8 mm. wide where it leaves the blade and tapering for about 3·5 or 4 cm. to a pointed end. Except where it is continued in this tang, the blade has a horizontal bottom. The tang is heated and so burned into the wooden handle; the blacksmith, with this as all iron tools and weapons, supplies only the iron, and the buyer makes his own handle. The edge is produced in the first place by hammering on each side, followed by rubbing down a whet-stone. Being made of soft iron smelted from local ore, these knives can be given an extremely sharp point and fine edge. They are not usually [442] taken back to the smith to be sharpened, but are whetted on a stone; there is often a flat, black, polished, communal whet-stone outside the men's dormitory (*gotul*) in a hill village.

411 Besides fitting the tang into a short, cylindrical, wooden handle, about 6·5 to 7·5 cm. long, and in diameter 2 cm. at the base and 322 somewhat thinner where the tang enters it, the Hill Maria makes a wooden sheath of two flat pieces of wood trimmed roughly to the shape of the blade, each of which has on one side a low flange slightly more than half as thick as the thick edge of the blade. The two flat pieces are laid on each other, the flanged edges together, and are joined by whipping of twine, *kosa* silk or millimetre-wide thin thongs of hide at the broad top, over a groove round the centre of the sheath, and near its point. The sheath is often carved, [531] favourite designs being rough lozenges in relief on a bar, or a bar indented, or bands of three parallel lines.

411 This knife the Maria uses for slicing bamboo and all ordinary cutting purposes; holding the handle loosely in his hand he uses its full weight for chopping with the concave portion of the blade pieces of wood up to 3 cm. in diameter, getting a surprisingly straight cross-section; he usually chops all round the circumference to a depth of a third of the diameter, then breaks off the portion to

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be severed, trimming the break with the knife held and used in the normal cutting position; he carves patterns in relief with the sharp point, or, holding the knife vertically, rolls the handle between the flat palms of his hand so as to drill holes with the point, trimming the edges of the holes with a burning ember. 411

The Bison-horn Maria uses a similar knife, often much larger, and seldom with a sheath. His *banda* is like a dao, but it is really a glorified and enlarged knife, with a thick end, and sometimes a pronounced bend or angle in the centre of the cutting edge; he uses this for lopping thick saplings or bamboo culms. But the use of the *banda* is not universal, and may be borrowed from Parjas or other tribes to the east. Similar weapons, but socketed on to long shafts of bamboo, and known as *gagra*, are used by the northern Murias and Jhorias, occasionally by Hill Marias, as weapons of offence and defence or billhooks for bamboo and saplings; the ordinary *gagra* has a concavely curved edge and a point, the *chhuri gagra* a convex edge and no point, while the *bhalu gagra* has an edge curving concavely from the top to a bend about half way along its length, and thence concavely to the socket. [177]

The Hill Maria calls his axe *mag'su*, which is the hill gutturalized version of the ordinary Gondi word *maras* used all over the Central Provinces. The Bison-horn Maria uses a totally different word for his axe of this shape, *godel*. The Halbi word is *tangya*. Like the Naga axe, the *mag'su* or *godel*[1] is an iron blade, decidedly suggestive of a long stone celt in form "1"; but unlike that axe, the butt of the blade ends in a socket for the haft, not in a tang inserted in a hole in the haft. The cutting edge of the blade among the Hill Marias seldom exceeds 7 cm. width, and 15 cm. is the maximum length of the blade from the cutting edge to the socket, which encloses a haft 4 or 5 cm. in diameter. It has a pronounced 'waist' just before the socket, but this is far more marked on the longer Muria *maras* than on *mag'su* or *godel*. The *godel* is usually rather more massive than the *mag'su*. The blacksmith, when giving an axe its first edge or a new edge to a blunt axe, heats the axe well in his forge, and thoroughly hammers the actual edge. He then heats it again, and hammers it flat on each side till he forms a new edge. He repeats the heating, and grinds down the edge by rubbing each side down a lump of stone. After a further slight heating he dips it in cold water to temper the edge, which is then ready for use. The haft is set at slightly less than a right-angle to the blade, the thick socket being wedged with a thin slip of wood. 412 412 326

A type of axe found still sometimes in the hill villages, where it is known as *pata endemma mag'su* (the song-and-dance axe, because 412 535

[1] Hutton, *Angami Nagas*, p. 65.

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342 of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner
251 where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of
[769] the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain ; their *penda* slopes are
[432] far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

342 The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small
[513] children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *akki* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc.
[273] If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like
[415] an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction
● 326] in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orka*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or ' wine-ladle ' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

343 There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

422 The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

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The favourite basketry material is bamboo, in thin strips varying from half an inch to three-quarters in width. Occasionally the wefts are of reed, coloured twine, or bamboos pared down to the thickness of twigs. Patterns are produced by using warps of dry bamboo strips from the heart-wood, and wefts of green strips from the outer rind. Nearly all the Hill Maria basketry is twilled, with each weft passing over and then under two or three warps, the topmost edge or rim being twilled-twined with a weft of thin bamboo pared to the size of twigs; and sometimes an ornamental plaited ring is worked around the central circumference. The measure baskets made by the Hill Marias and brought by them to the markets for sale or for measuring out the grain which they sell or the salt which they buy are of different shapes and sizes for each commodity. The grain measure is a *bhurki*, eight of which make a *soli*[1] or half a seer, i.e. a measure containing about a pound's weight of rice. There are slightly different sizes for rice, *kutki*, mustard and pulses, according to the size of the different grains; all *bhurki* measures are little round baskets with slightly convex bottoms and uniform in diameter at top and bottom. For salt, a rather similar basket called a *kochli* is made, sufficient to hold one pice worth of salt, of roughly the same capacity as a *bhurki*; they are graduated for smaller quantities by being plastered inside with varying quantities of mud or cow-dung. *Mahua* flowers are measured by being heaped on shallow dishes called *kurli*, shaped like inverted cones or Annamese hats; each should contain 4 *pailis*, or 128 *bhurkis*, and those that I tested were remarkably accurate. The Hill Marias sell also the flat basket dishes already referred to, but rather larger than those they use for their own plates; they are called *bediya*.

2. Iron-work

Frequent mention has already been made of the Maria blacksmiths, and some of their tempering and manufacturing methods have been described in the section dealing with weapons and tools. These blacksmiths appear to be of Maria stock, speaking the Maria language, indistinguishable physically, having the same phratries and clans, and following the same customs. Enquiry in the big blacksmith settlements at Bagmundi Panera in Jagdalpur tahsil, at Kamargudem below the Aranpur ghat in Konta tahsil (both Bison-horn blacksmith villages), and from the Hill Maria blacksmiths at Nugur in Kutru zamindari, showed in every case that some of the blacksmiths either had themselves once been cultivators or had fathers who were originally

[1] 5 *tola* or Government rupees' weight of rice is contained in one *bhurki*: 8 *bhurkis* = 1 *soli*, 4 *solis* = 1 *paili*, 2 *pailis* = 1 *ori*, 2 *oris* = 1 *kurli*, 20 *oris* = 1 *khandi* = 40 *pailis*.

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Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyeq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyeq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

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and removed. This air passage serves for the forge the same purpose as the earthen pipe *tuyère* for the smelting furnace, and the bamboo pipes of the bellows are arranged to converge at its entrance. The hole originally excavated is filled with *mahua* charcoal. 326

The smiths' only tools, which they make themselves, are the pointed and blunt ended hammer or *mutti* already mentioned, and long iron pincers with long noses, which they call *andes*. They generally have large and small hammers. The haft is inserted in a hole right through the maximum thickness of the head, at a point about a third of its length from the broad flat end; the remaining two-thirds tapers to a rough point.

3. Brass-work

The brass workers already frequently mentioned, unlike the blacksmiths, are by now practically a distinct caste. Hindus and Murias call them Ghasias, which is the name applied elsewhere in Central India, Chhota Nagpur and Orissa to one of the lowest and most degraded of the untouchable castes, whose usual occupation is grass-cutting and horse-tending, while some sections make combs for the hair or for weavers' looms. Even in Bastar, where many of them are skilled artisans, the wildest Maria holds them in profound contempt. The Maria calls them Gharwa. In outward appearance there is little difference between them and their Muria or Maria neighbours, and probably in the remote past they may have been recruited from these or other aboriginal stocks. Rohilla traders and oppressive zamindari managers in the past have often employed Ghasia duns to extract money from Marias; such is the Maria's feeling of degradation if a Ghasia comes near his house that the villagers would combine to pay a miserable rupee or two to these extortioners to get rid of their foul presence. 326 564

The Gharwas buy old brass or bronze in the markets or through Hindu middlemen. They make their brass ornaments, spoons, bells and Muria hunting horns by the *cire-perdue* process. The first or inner core of their moulds is made of earth from white-ants' hills, and known as *mati-kutan*; the earth is puddled with water and moulded to the needed shape in the hands. This is dried in the sun, and when hard covered with a coating of beeswax, on which the desired pattern is made in relief with long thin threads or small pellets of beeswax; various patterns can be produced by whipping these threads round the circumference of the *mati-kutan* core, or applying them on the sides of its plain wax covering in coils, spirals, suns, moons, lozenges, twined, or in any other pattern; and the pellets are used to produce bands of dots. The wax is warmed till it is pliant in the hands, and then forced through a tool called a 326 [439]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

326 *pichki* for the making of these thin wax threads. The *pichki* consists of two parts each shaped like the letter T, but with a short stem and the cross-piece or handle three times as long as the stem. One T-piece is entirely of hard wood, handle and stem being cylindrical and smoothly rounded; but the stem of the second T-piece is hollowed so that the solid stem of the first may fit closely in it, and at its bottom it has a brass cap with holes like the lid of a pepper pot. A lump of soft wax is placed in this hollow stem, and then the solid stem of the other T-piece is fitted into the hollow socket, and the Gharwa presses the two cross-piece handles together in one hand, so as to force wax through the perforations like meat through a mincing machine.

When the core has been covered with wax and the wax pattern, it is known as *main-kutan*, *main* meaning wax. The *main-kutan* is covered over closely with another layer of white-ant clay with a drain-hole left at one end; this clay must be pressed firmly on to the wax pattern, to take the impress of it. It is dried and heated enough to melt the wax, which is run off from the drain-hole. It remains to replace the melted wax with molten metal. The *main-kutan* as it stands is not strong enough, and so it is again covered over with a thick coating of white-ant clay mixed with water in which certain leaves and grasses have been cooked, which gives the clay a greenish colour. At the top, over the drain-hole through which the wax was poured out, a large clay-cup or *khondi* is plastered as part of this new clay covering, and the whole affair is now known as a *kashut-chancha*. This is hardened in the sun, and then baked in a furnace with the *khondi* uppermost; the metal melts and falls through the drain-hole into the place occupied by the wax, and takes the pattern left by the wax on the clay that was plastered over it.

323 There are no potters in the heart of the Abujhmar hills, partly because in the valleys of the clear rocky mountain streams there is no suitable clay, and partly because the Hill Maria still grows and uses gourds for many purposes, or else uses bamboo tubes. But all now use earthen pots at least for cooking, and for the Pot of the Departed, many also for drawing and storing water. At every market, therefore, in the valleys and plains below there are potters who do a considerable trade with the Hill Marias, and some have settled in their villages like Nugur and Lakka between the Kutru foot of the hills and the Indrawati, while, of course, potters are plentiful in the Bison-horn country. [564] The potters belong to the great Kumhar potter caste, at least in name, though here again many differ little in type from surrounding Marias. They use the common type of Indian potters' wheel, and

4. Pottery

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

there is no need to describe their processes in this book. The potter, like the Gharwa, expects immediate payment for his goods and is not a tribal servant remunerated with a retainer of grain at harvest like the blacksmith; but he often takes payment in grain. For a Bison-horn Maria marriage, the potter will make and supply as many pots as are required, but after the marriage is paid a bullock, cow or calf for his work. 326 ●

C. *Musical Instruments*

The Bison-horn Marias use the large double-membrane drums called *birya-dol*, of which typical specimens are shown in the illustrations in Plates VIII and IX. The hollow cylindrical body of these drums is a section of the trunk of a *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) or a *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*) tree up to sixteen or seventeen inches in diameter. The right hand membrane is made of goat-skin, even by those who have the goat as totem, and this is struck by the finger-tips of the open right hand. The other membrane is of cow- or bullock-hide, and this is struck with a bamboo stick carried in the left hand, and sometimes adorned at the end with a bunch of the pea-pod iron pellet-bells that are attached to the *tirdudi* bamboo dancing-sticks of their women. The membranes are stitched to each other by thongs of cow-hide criss-crossed over the outside of the wooden cylinder. That cylinder is sometimes as much as three feet long, and the weight is very considerable. The drum is slung over the right shoulder by a sling of hide or cord, sometimes adorned with cowries, and is carried obliquely across the stomach, the right end being the higher. There is no season among them when drum-beating is taboo or *melo* (their term for the Hill Maria *polo*). They have different drum rhythms for different dances, for weddings, for success in the chase, and a dactylic beat, for the drum beaten from the roof of the house to announce death; for the *pen-harsila* dance at their festival corresponding to the Hill Maria Koqsar they use the drum-stick only, and not their right hands, the rhythm being seven short beats followed by two long beats. 534 [824] [533]

1. Drums

These *dol* drums are occasionally found in Hill Maria villages also, but are a sign of cultural contact with the Bison-horn Marias. The essential Hill Maria drum is the single-membrane *turam* drum. The body is a wooden bowl, generally the rounded base of the hollow trunk of an exhausted *salphi* (*Caryota urens*) tree, trimmed with the waist-knife to bowl-shape; sometimes a section of *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) trunk is similarly whittled into bowl-shape. The membrane is dried untanned cow-hide, hair outwards, and this is [824]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make
285 baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
614

[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.